Cover layout with a focus on printed prices, and the dating of Cleveland Publishing's novel magazines

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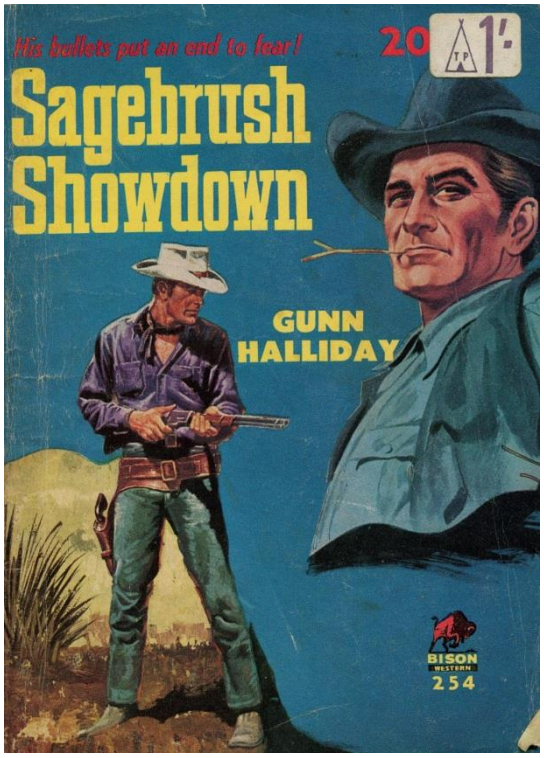
[Version: 30 January 2026]

The Aussie pulp westerns

Between 1954 and 2018 the Australian Cleveland Publishing Co. Pty. Ltd. published more than 8,000 cheap massmarket mixed-author novel magazines within the western genre in twenty different numbered series (Table 1). As the publisher normally started the numbering of each series not from number one, but instead from 100, 200 etc., there is no direct correspondence between the numbers printed on the magazines and the number of magazines published. Moreover, almost all of the magazines lacked information on printing dates. The front covers had stunning paintings by skilled illustrators like Walter Stackpole and Stanley Pitt, and most likely it is these covers that have contributed to the fact that these magazines have became valued items for collectors. Most magazines had barely one hundred printed pages, and their contents were short novels written by Australian authors using many pseudonymes with a western touch like Shad Denver, Emerson Dodge, and Marshall Grover (Johnson-Woods 2012). The last novel by an American author I've seen is *Three Trails* by George C. Appell as Cleveland Western #712, and using cover art inspired by the American Perma Book #M3112.



Front cover of Bison Western #254 with British price on glued label from Thorpe & Porter over printed dual price 20c 2'-.

Number and price on front covers

The fact that both the serieal number and the price of each magazine were printed on the front cover has made it easy to collect these data from cover scans, frequently displayed at online 2nd-hand markets like eBay and Gumtree, or in Facebook groups like Cleveland Publishing and Western Fiction Fanatics. One problem is, however, the frequent hiding of the printed price when the magazines were sold as used in fleamarkets. Common methods were cutting the upper right corner, inking over the printed price, or covering it with handwritten labels. The same problem is found on magazines sold outside Australia, like in the UK where the distributor Thorpe & Porter added their glued price labels with their tipi symbol and the letters T & P. However, no such labels were seen added by Cleveland themselves, indicating no regular sales at reduced prices. A practice that was common in Scandinavia (Nilsson 2018). I have chosen to neglect the British labels, although their values may have some useful

information. One example is provided by the 1'6 over 7½p label used near the British Decimal Day in February 1971. The problem with glued labels, however, is that they can be attached to the book anytime. The same goes for the stamps used for adding British prices.

Table 1. The 20 of Cleveland Publishing's western series of novel magazines studied together with the first and last serial number with printed price recorded from cover. The 'Number' column shows the number of issues within the total span, whereas those actually seen follow in the next, together with their proportion in percent.

Series	First #	Last #	Number	Seen	Seen %
Arizona	104	441	338	62	18,3
Big Horn	303	447	145	44	30,3
Bison	108	1609	1502	286	19,0
Bobcat	103	444	342	78	22,8
Chisholm	648	796	149	40	26,8
Cleveland	535	3052	2518	523	20,8
Condor	161	297	137	25	18,2
Coronado	934	1082	149	43	28,9
High Brand	200	346	147	46	31,3
Iron Horse	160	302	143	41	28,7
Lobo	202	347	146	38	26,0
Peacemaker	153	297	145	31	21,4
Phoenix	209	353	145	38	26,2
Pinto	402	546	145	34	23,4
Rawhide	346	547	202	27	13,4
Santa Fe	300	442	143	38	26,6
Sierra	414	557	144	34	23,6
Top Hand	210	348	139	28	20,1
Tumble Weed	165	302	138	41	29,7
Winchester	723	855	133	34	25,6
Total			7050	1531	21,7

Cleveland Western the backbone

The 20 series studied differ in their number of issues and frequency of publication. Most likely the different series also have various proportions of reprints relative to originals, and different author representation. Oldest is Cleveland Western, with a numbering that started already back in 1953. Issue #533 was the first one with the Indian head logo and the Cleveland Western text on the front cover, and those with lower numbers are often referred to as Cleveland books. The price was two bob from the start. The highest number observed is #3052, sold at $ 4½ in 2016. I have here used Cleveland Western as price standard, matching the serial numbers with the dating of them used in the AustLit database.

Bison Western the last to go

The second longest series is Bison Western, ending with #1609 in 2018 at the maximum price observed of $ 5.25. It seemingly got started in the early 60's with #100 as the first issue. Together with Cleveland Western, the Bison series make up half of all issues of all 20 series combined.

Every fifth issue recorded

If my studied material is to be restricted by the lowest and highest serial numbers observed of each series, it covers 7,050 issues of which the printed price was observed on 1,531 (Table 1). This means that my data represent about every fifth issue. The distribution of price observations differ however, both within and between series. Rawhide Western had the lowest proportion of issues seen, only 13 %, whereas the coverage was best for High Brand Western, with 31 %. Looking at sheer numbers, Cleveland and Bison Western stand out, as expected, with 523 and 286 issues, respectively.

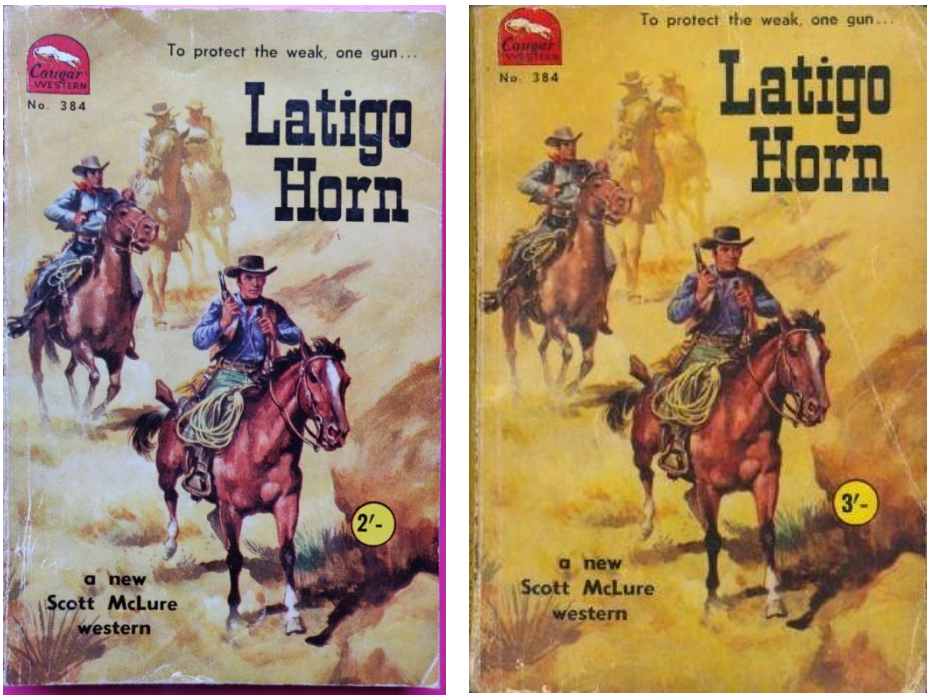
Table 2. Printed prices recorded from the studied issues of the Cleveland Western and Bison Western series. Columns give first and last serial number with the respective price version, in Cleveland Western followed by the number of issues within and between intervals. Dating of issues follow chiefly the AustLit database. Not listed is the "TWO SHILLINGS" price, only rarely observed in some of the other series.

	Cleveland W				Bison W		
Printed price	**First #**	**Last #**	**Issues**	**Gap**	**First #**	**Last #**	**Year**
2' AUST	533	816	284	6			54-60
2' in circle	823	1012	190	5	108	192	61-65
2' / 20 CENTS	1018	1055	38	1	199	216	65-66
20c / 2'	1057	1128	72	19	222	254	66-67
20 CENTS			0	0	258	258	67
25 CENTS	1148	1327	180	15	263	358	67-70
30 CENTS	1343	1451	109	2	363	414	71
35 CENTS	1454	1525	72	19	430	452	72-73
40 CENTS	1545	1596	52	4	455	487	74
40C / NZ 50C	1601	1616	16	23	496	497	74
50 CENTS	1640	1713	74	9	508	529	75-76
60 CENTS	1723	1818	96	3	552	584	76-78
75 CENTS	1822	1937	116	7	602	647	79-82
$ 1	1945	2019	75	10	659	678	83-85
$ 1.50	2030	2170	141	9	689	718	86-89
$ 1.5 / NZ 2.25	2180	2184	5	9			89
$ 2 / NZ 275	2194	2436	243	8	724	783	90-95
$ 2	2445	2481	37	6	793	878	95-96
$ 2.50	2488	2531	44	6	888	956	96-96
$ 2.95	2538	2629	92	10	966	985	97-99
$ 3.25	2640	2711	72	16	992	1096	00-02
$ 3.50	2728	2840	113	4	1099	1215	02-04
$ 3.75	2845	2957	113	0	1248	1359	05-09
$ 4.00	2958	3007	50	26	1411	1501	09-14
$ 4.50	3034	3052	19		1502	1554	15-16
$ 4.99					1555	1594	17-18
$ 5.25					1595	1609	18-18

Twenty series but no Cougars

I have here excluded the Cougar Western series as it used the paperback instead of the

magazine format, and was slightly more expensive than the 20 series studied. From what I've seen so far, the dating of the Cougar Western books seems much more complex, and hopefully possible to adress in a separate work later on. Among Cleveland's novel magazines there are also a number of hero- and author-specific series like Benedict & Brazos, Bravo, Halliday, Johnny Macaw, Savage, The Avenger, The Enforcer, or The Loner that are excluded from this study. This goes also for the reprints series of a more recent origin, like A Classic Western, Cleveland Classic, or Legends of the West.



Front cover from two copies of Cougar Western #384 differing in the printed price.

The first assumption

In order to use the printed price information for dating of issues one has to make some assumptions. First, I assume that serial numbers form a temporal sequence, i.e. that an issue with a higher number was published after one with a lower number within the same series. As normally prices increase over time, this means that an issue with a higher price was printed after one with a lower price, at least within the same series. Aberrant observations can be explained by the presence of reprints of issues, keeping the same serial number, but with a higher price, adapted to the price of the issues sold as first prints at the time. However, issues from the same series with the same serial numbers but differing in price were rarely seen. The main reason for this is most likely that very few issues were seen in more than one copy. Of Cougar Western I've seen copies costing both 2 and 3'- of #332, 339, 384, and 390. My interpretation is that the first print had the lower price. In other series, I've judged copies as reprints when having a higher price too early in the serial number sequence. One example is Rawhide Western #346 with 25 CENTS in a red square. The other copy of this edition I've seen had its corner cut.

The second assumption

Serial numbers are of little use when dating of different series are to be compared as series

started both at different times and at different numbers. I did experience this difficulty when dating the stand-alone novels written by Leonard F. Meares and with first publication in different Cleveland series (Nilsson 2026). I did find it difficult to identify the first edition when the same novel had appeared in two or more different series.

In order to compare prices and their layout instead of numbers, I'm making the assumption that the publisher increased the magazine price at about the same time for all similar series. This assumption is supported by the same step-wise price increase seen in all series here studied (Table 2). It is also supported by the observation that prices and their layout changes follow the same pattern in all series (Tables 3-5).

Table 3. Printed prices recorded from the studied issues of the Arizona Western to Coronado Western series. Intervals based on first and last issue seen only. Years based on dating of the Cleveland Western series.

Printed price	Year	Arizona	Big Horn	Bobcat	Chisholm	Condor	Coronado
2' AUST	54-60						934-940
TWO SHILLINGS					659		945
2' in circle	61-65	104-123	303-329	103-146	648-683	161-180	952-972
2' / 20 CENTS	65-66		337-341		687-689	196	974-978
20c / 2'	66-67	159-170	342-344	162-174		194	980
20 CENTS	67						
25 CENTS	67-70	182-215	346-362	185-226	699-714	201-215	993-999
30 CENTS	71	227-241	365-374	228-255	715-716	219-220	1000-1003
35 CENTS	72-73	257-270	379	258-267	723-727	229	1014
40 CENTS	74	278-288	381-386	283-289	733-737	235	1017-1021
40C / NZ 50C	74	294		293-296		241	
50 CENTS	75-76	299-312	395	309-313	745-747	244	1028
60 CENTS	76-78	323-339	398-405	329-335	751-757		1038-1043
75 CENTS	79-82	345-366	408-412	349-370	761	264	1046-1050
$ 1	83-85	374-376	420	377-386	768	270	1051
$ 1.50	86-89	388-401	422-432	389-405	773	280-281	1063-1066
$ 1.5 / NZ 2.25	89				786	287	
$ 2 / NZ 275	90-95	405-431	438-447	409-424	787-796	295-297	1078-1082
$ 2	95-96	441		444			

Retrospective dating

Seems Cleveland in their reprint issues normally cited on the title page the year of an earlier print or edition of the same story. If the earlier issue can be tracked down, this may provide a way to date it exactly in retrospect. Seems this date is often misunderstood as being the printing year of the reprint issue itself. Another problem is that it is hard to know unless one has the magazine in one's hand. However, some eBay postings add also a photo of the title page, which then may be recorded. I have so far recorded about 30 such dates, and managed to find the earlier reprint referred to in five cases: Cleveland Western 1478 from 1972, 1528 from 1974, 1685 from 1975, 2940 from 2008, and Pinto Western 462 from 1967. It is nice to see that they match my datings based on cover prices, a fact that is encouraging further study

of these first print years. The study of them makes the need for a good catalogue of Cleveland's many westerns very clear. There is of course Greame Flanagans 1994 book, that, however, is far from complete, and hard to find.

Table 4. Printed prices recorded from the studied issues of the High Brand Western to Pinto Western series. Intervals based on first and last issue seen only. Years based on dating of the Cleveland Western series.

Printed price	Year	High Brand	Iron Horse	Lobo	Peacemak.	Phoenix	Pinto
2' AUST	54-60	200-201			153		409
TWO SHILLINGS		208					402
2' in circle	61-65	207-234			165-186		412-434
2' / 20 CENTS	65-66	238			189		437
20c / 2'	66-67	244			194-195		438-443
20 CENTS	67						
25 CENTS	67-70	250-263	160-174	202-216	203-215	215-223	445-463
30 CENTS	71	265-273	176-184	225-236	218-226	229-237	464-473
35 CENTS	72-73	275-278	190-197	240	227-229	240-241	474-475
40 CENTS	74	281-284	201-206	250-257	239	250-255	486
40C / NZ 50C	74	287					489
50 CENTS	75-76		214-222	265-266	245	262-271	
60 CENTS	76-78		224-239	273-281		284	498-505
75 CENTS	79-82	308-309	221	293	262	290-295	
$ 1	83-85	317-319	248-254	301-306	268	298-300	
$ 1.50	86-89	324-332	258-272	307-326	270-282	307-320	526-529
$ 1.5 / NZ 2.25	89						524
$ 2 / NZ 275	90-95	337-346	284-302	327-347	288-297	328-353	538-546
$ 2	95-96					324	

Cover layout changes

Most, but not all of the observed front cover layout changes are related to prices. The initial two shilling price was printed in three different ways. The oldest Cleveland books I've seen, with numbers close to 300 had 2'- placed within a coloured circle. After issue #500 this was changed to "2'- AUST." adjacent to "Cleveland" and the serial number. This layout was in Cleveland Western used at least up to issue #816, and then the publisher returned to the old layout with the coloured circle. As I understand, the colour variation of the circle is only there to adjust its visability and has no special meaning. The 2'- AUST layout was recorded from low number issues of six other series, that thus seemingly were started before the others (Tables 3-5). As seen only on single issues of six series, the "TWO SHILLINGS" layout was used only occasionally.

Dual prices

The dual prices combining 2'- with 20 cents were used when Australia converted to decimal currency on 14 February 1966. Books with dual prices can be dated to the money changeover period in 1966 and 1967. After this the cent price was placed within a red rectangle, starting

with the rare 20, seen only on issue #258 of Bison Western, and soon replaced with 25 cents that lasted for a longer period.

Another type of dual price was the one combining prices in Australia with a slightly higher price in New Zealand. The Decimal Day of New Zealand appeared on 10 July 1967, i.e about a year after Australia. In this category the following combinations were observed (Tab. 2): 40/50 cents, 1.5/2.25 $, and 2/2.75 $. Seems these were the only foreign prices printed on the studied series.

Table 5. Printed prices recorded from the studied issues of the Rawhide Western to Winchester Western series. Intervals based on first and last issue seen only. Years based on dating of the Cleveland Western series.

Printed price	Year	Rawhide	Santa Fe	Sierra	Top Hand	Tumble Weed	Winchester
2' AUST	54-60		301-303	415-419			
TWO SHILLINGS		401	300				
2' in circle	61-65	413-425	304-329	424-447	210-227		723-740
2' / 20 CENTS	65-66	435		448	235		743-748
20c / 2'	66-67				239		
20 CENTS	67						
25 CENTS	67-70	454-461	346-363	462-475	257-261	165-173	758-771
30 CENTS	71	464-473	364-373	479-486	265-269	176-185	773-780
35 CENTS	72-73	475	370-379		279	191-195	782
40 CENTS	74	481-486	383		283-288	206-209	790-793
40C / NZ 50C	74	487-489	387				
50 CENTS	75-76		390-393	508-510	293		800
60 CENTS	76-78		398-402	511	299-307	225-227	808
75 CENTS	79-82			522	312-314	240-244	819-822
$ 1	83-85		417-420	528-532	316	249-255	823
$ 1.50	86-89	524-529	425-426	537-544	326	256-271	830-841
$ 1.5 / NZ 2.25	89						
$ 2 / NZ 275	90-95	547	442	555-557	338-348	278-302	843-855

Logo replaced by box

Each series had its own logo printed on the front cover from the start. In order to increase its visability, the logo was provided with a monochrome background in most series at the price of 25 cents, like Sierra #473 and Top Hand #257. In all series except Cleveland Western (and Cougar) the logo was replaced with the name on a red rectangle. This happened when the price was 60 or 75 cents.

Then finally, at the price of $ 2/NZ 2.75, the whole cover got a new more uniform layout with a broad coloured frame and the title in big white letters with a black outline. The red rectangles with the serial name and number, and the price, respectively, were placed in the upper corners. The new layout was used in all series studied, and my guess is that it was introduced at about the same time in all of them.

However, Cleveland Western kept its logo instead of the red box found on all other series. At the top of the front cover, within a white oval, the text "a BRAND NEW yarn" was first added on Cleveland Western #2519 with the price $ 2.50. The few issues without this text were seemingly reprints of old stories.

Table 6. Occurrence of three front cover laoyout changes observed in the 20 Cleveland series studied documented as first issue seen and its actual printed price. The Cleveland Western logo was never replaced. The last column gives the number of issues published between the first and the third layout change.

	Price in red box		Name in red box		Framed layout		
Series	**Issue #**	**Price**	**Issue #**	**Price**	**Issue #**	**Price**	**Distance**
Arizona	182	25c	323	60c	420	2/2,75	238
Big Horn	346	25c	403	60c	447	2/2,75	101
Bison	258	20c	602	75c	752	2/2,75	494
Bobcat	186	25c	329	60c	423	2/2,75	237
Chisholm	701	25c	751	60c	796	2/2,75	95
Cleveland	1148	25c			2310	2/2,75	1162
Condor	201	25c	264	75c	297	2/2,75	96
Coronado	993	25c	1043	60c	1082	2/2,75	89
High Brand	250	25c	304	?	346	2/2,75	96
Iron Horse	160	25c	221	75c	293	2/2,75	133
Lobo	202	25c	293	75c	344	2/2,75	142
Peacemaker	212	25c	262	75c	297	2/2,75	85
Phoenix	209	25c	270	75c	345	2/2,75	136
Pinto	445	25c	498	60c	546	2/2,75	101
Rawhide	456	25c	524	$ 1.50	547	2/2,75	91
Santa Fe	346	25c	402	60c	442	2/2,75	96
Sierra	462	25c	522	75c	557	2/2,75	95
Top Hand	257	25c	299	60c	346	2/2,75	89
Tumble Weed	166	25c	225	60c	294	2/2,75	128
Winchester	758	25c	808	60c	855	2/2,75	97

Assuming that the three layout changes dealt with in Table 6 occurred at about the same time in all 20 studies series, the number of issues published between the first and the last change says something about the frequency of publication during a period of about 20 years. It was highest in Cleveland Western, followed by Bison Western, which was followed by Arizona and Bobcat Western. The remaining series all produced about a hundred issued over about 20 years (Table 6).

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Year	CLEV	BIS	AZ	BO	PE	HB	SF	PI	SI	CN	CO	TH	BH	RA	CH	WI	IH	TW	LO	PH
54	535																			
61																				
68	25c: 1148	258	182	186	212	250	346	445	462	993	201	257	346	456	701	758	160	166	202	209
78	Logo:	602	323	329	262	304	402	498	522	1043	264	299	403	524	751	808	221	225	293	270
92	Frame: 2310	752	420	423	297	346	442	546	557	1082	297	346	447	547	796	855	293	294	344	345
96																				
16																				
18																				

A rough overview of differences and similarities in the publication of the twenty western series from Cleveland Publishing studied. Series names coded by initial letters, with (CN) Coronado and (CO) Condor. Page numbers given for each series for first observation of three different layout changes: (top) price in red box or 25c, (mid) logo replaced with text in red box at price of 60 or 75c, and (bottom) framed layout at price of $2/NZ2.75. The larger width of the series to the left indicate a higher publication frequency. Time scale not very exact, and to be improved by increasing the sample size.

A collection of outtakes from the studied Cleveland front covers showing all prices used except the rare 20 cents and the "2'- 20c" one-liner. Note that digits were white from the start, and then mostly black when placed over a monochrome background. At the price of 3.75 $ the digits returned to white, however. The red 25 cents box did early on occur also in blue or yellow variants. Collage made by the author.

Back cover from unknown Cleveland magazine at the period when the price was 2'-. Seemingly published before the most recent series had started, as among others Iron Horse, Tumble Weed, Lobo, and Phoenix Western are lacking. All logos except the Indian head used on Cleveland Western were later replaced with the typed name in a red box.

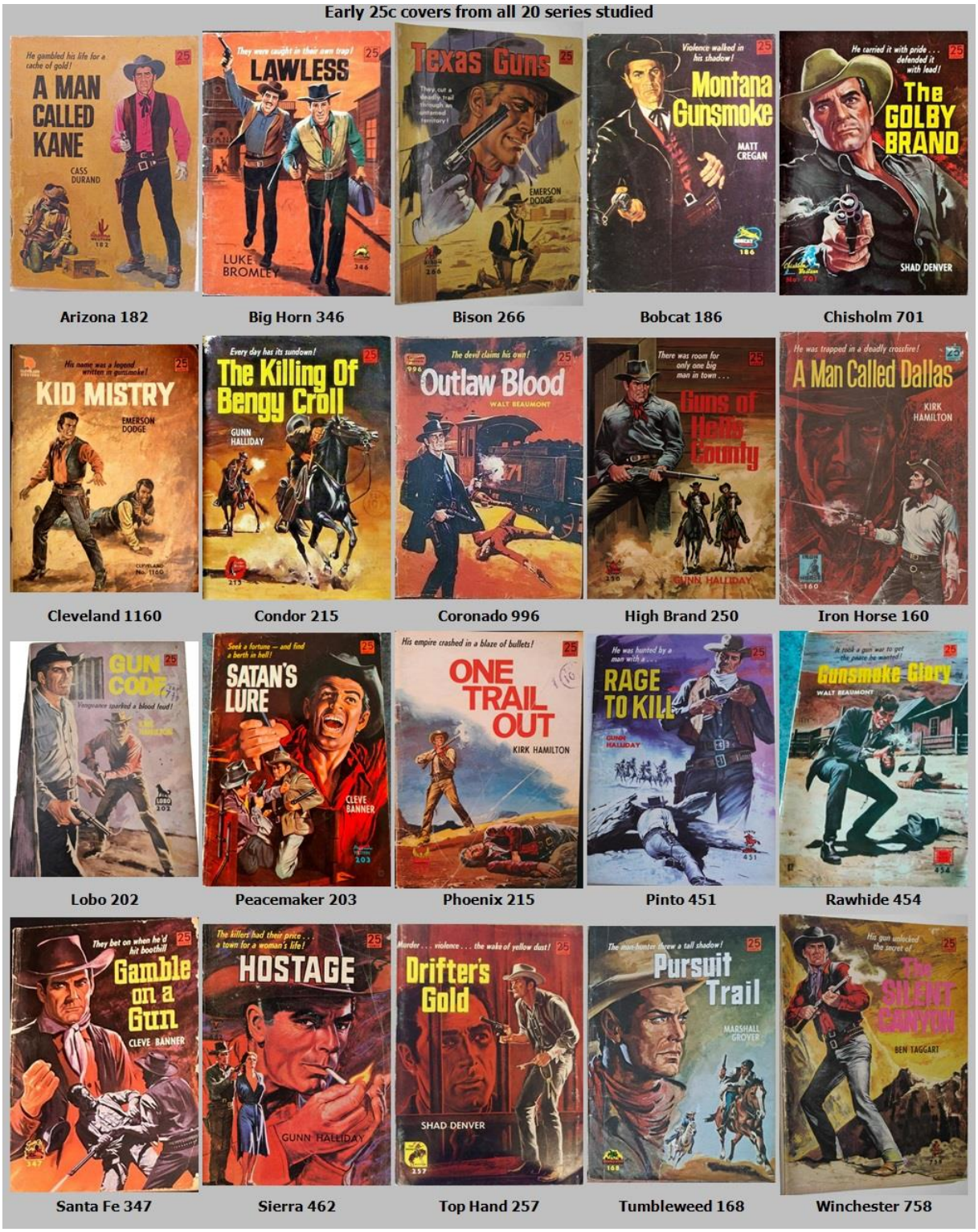

Plate 1. Cover scans representing all 20 series studied at the segment when the 25c price was placed within a normally red box, corresponding to the late 60's.

Plate 2. Cover scans representing the 20 series studied at the beginning of the segment when the serial logos were replaced with the name typed within a normally red box. Only Cleveland Western was allowed to keep its serial logo, the Indian head. The printed price was at the time 60c, and higher values are here most likely due to incomplete sampling of issues.

Plate 3. Cover scans representing all the 20 studied series at the segment when the modern framed layout was introduced and the printed price was 2/NZ 2.75 $, corresponding to the early 90's. Note that the title always was set with big white letters with black outline, and that the colour of the frame matched the painting. Many of the series were here close to their end, with only Cleveland and Bison Western surviving into the new millenium.